

EXIT 16 DDI

Colchester, VT

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

December 2021

Prepared For:



Vermont Agency of Transportation
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Submitted by:



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REVISION HISTORY

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is a “living document” in which revisions and updates are issued, as determined by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and WSP (the Public Involvement Team), to add, modify or delete provisions for an effective project that achieves the project’s goals.

Revisions to the PIP are authorized and issued by VTrans. WSP shall prepare and issue revisions to the PIP on behalf of VTrans. Any of the project participants may request or suggest a revision to the PIP; however, all changes will be reviewed and must be authorized as described.

PIP Revision	Page Revision	Date	Description
		November 2018	Initial Release
1.0	All	December 2021	Overall content update to reflect tense changes, construction contract being broken out into two phases and other schedule changes, launch of the new website in 2020 and launch of the interactive map in 2021.

1.0 Executive Summary

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) is improving road conditions along the U.S. Routes 2/7 corridor near I-89 Exit 16 in Colchester for safety and mobility. The project consists of improvements to approximately 1 mile of U.S. Routes 2/7. The centerpiece of the project is the installation of Vermont's first Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). A DDI is a type of interchange where traffic is crossed to the left side of the road to ease access to the interstate and eliminate difficult left turns without increasing the number of lanes or traffic signals.

The Exit 16 DDI provides VTTrans with the unique opportunity to mitigate construction impacts to properties and reduce costs by using existing infrastructure and bridges. The project is anticipated to increase safety and provide smoother mobility, less traffic congestion, and reduce the number and severity of traffic collisions occurring in the current diamond interchange at U.S. Routes 2/7 and I-89. The benefits are not limited to improving vehicular traffic flow. The DDI will provide safer passage for those traveling by non-motorized vehicles and those on foot.

Construction of the Exit 16 DDI project will be completed in two phases under two separate construction contracts which will be executed sequentially. The first construction phase is scheduled to be advertised and awarded in Winter/Spring 2022 and is anticipated to be completed by Spring 2023. Phase 1 construction will consist of utility relocation, waterline replacement, utility duct bank installation, retaining wall construction, and some ledge removal. The second construction phase is anticipated to be advertised and awarded in Winter/Spring 2023 and is anticipated to be completed by Summer 2025. Phase 2 construction will consist of the bulk of the roadway work including the installation of the DDI, the addition of turning lanes, and the implementation of the pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is a living document that describes the intent, methods, and expectations for work completed by the Exit 16 DDI Project's Public Information Team before, during, and after the construction of phase 1 and phase 2 of the Exit 16 DDI project. The PIP describes the role of the Public Involvement Team and outline how the team will continue to foster and maintain open communication with the public while striving to achieve the following goals.

Goal #1: Build public acceptance of the Exit 16 DDI Project.

Goal #2: Educate and inform public stakeholders about the Exit 16 DDI Project.

2.0 COORDINATION AND OVERSIGHT

2.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vermont Agency of Transportation's (VTrans) mission is to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. VTrans is working to improve travel conditions and increase safety in the US Routes 2/7 interchange at I-89 Exit 16. Each of the organizations listed below have an important role on the Exit 16 DDI Project and will assist VTrans in its efforts to follow its mission and achieve project goals.

2.1.1 WSP USA Inc.

WSP (Public Involvement Team), a Communications and Public Involvement consultant hired by VTrans, is responsible for all public engagement activities as outlined in this Public Involvement Plan. The Public Involvement Team will continue to prepare and distribute all public project communications, develop a project website, branding, and an educational program to assist VTrans in introducing Vermont's first diverging diamond interchange.

2.1.2 Stantec

Stantec, an engineering consultant was hired by VTrans to develop graphics and visualizations including an interactive, real-time driving simulator and a 90-second animation of the proposed DDI in Colchester, VT. The Public Involvement Team worked with Stantec to incorporate these graphics and visualizations into the project's educational programming and marketing materials.

2.1.3 Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

As the regional planning commission overseeing the project area, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) has been assisting VTrans and the Public Involvement Team through sharing valuable insight about the region, its stakeholders, other projects in the area, and alternate ways of reaching the greater community. The CCRPC has been assisting the Public Information Team in identifying community event opportunities where the team can participate.

The Public Information Team will continue to provide the CCRPC with project information and updates that can be distributed to regional stakeholders via Front Porch Forum, the CCRPC website, and/or email distribution.

2.1.4 Municipalities

Local municipalities and town officials are a valuable resource for information and happenings within their respective towns. Colchester and Winooski will continue to be involved heavily, as the two towns are immediately affected by construction efforts at Exit 16. The Public Involvement Team will continue to seek information and assistance from the towns of Burlington, Essex Jct., Milton, Essex Town, Williston, and Jericho as well. VTrans and the Public Involvement Team will continue to coordinate outreach efforts with the towns for consistent messaging about the project, its benefits, and potential construction impacts.

2.2 PROJECT MEETINGS

The Public Information Team has been meeting at least once monthly via conference call with VTrans to discuss ongoing and upcoming activities in relation to public involvement. In some instances, other project participants have been asked to join the call. It is anticipated that the Public Information Team will continue to participate in these conference calls at least once monthly throughout the life of the project.

During construction, weekly calls with the Resident Engineer will be required to obtain accurate information about current construction activities and to prepare advanced notification of the following week's activities and potential impacts.

3.0 COMMUNITY RELATIONS MANAGEMENT

The Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans will continue to maintain a close relationship with the community. Community Relations Management includes all outreach efforts put forth to discuss project news, benefits, milestones, and activities with the public.

The Public Involvement Team seeks to maximize opportunities to engage the public and neighboring communities through regular and proactive communication. This is accomplished by providing a foundation for the project and brand awareness while understanding the public needs and resolving issues related to the project that impact the community.

3.1 ESTABLISH STAKEHOLDER LIST

The Public Involvement Team will continue to populate and expand the preliminary stakeholder contact list in coordination with VTrans, the Town of Colchester, the City of Winooski, and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission to include residents, local businesses, emergency service providers, public and private schools, colleges, major employers, retailers, transit operators, and trucks.

3.2 IDENTIFY AND INTERVIEW KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The Public Involvement Team will continue to interview key stakeholders to establish relationships that will foster project implementation by gaining an understanding of their perspectives and concerns and relaying how this project will benefit them. The Public Involvement Team will continue to share the insight from these interviews with VTrans for consideration in the design process and project communications.

3.3 PUBLIC MEETINGS

A meeting was held for the public to provide an overview of the proposed Exit 16 DDI project with a focus on education on September 24th, 2019, well in advance of construction and an additional public meeting will be held for the public in the Spring of 2022, just before Phase 1 construction begins with a focus on the construction schedule and process. The meetings allow the public a chance to provide comments and concerns regarding the functionality of the DDI and the construction itself. These comments will continue to be recorded and addressed by the Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans. Those who do not wish to voice their comments publicly are offered an opportunity to provide a private written or verbal comment at the meeting or submit comments through the Exit 16 DDI website or by mail to the Public Involvement Team.

At least two weeks in advance of the meeting, legal notices were published in local newspapers. Legal notices will continue to be published in local newspapers at least two weeks in advance of all future public meetings.

3.4 DOOR-TO-DOOR AND TARGETED OUTREACH

Door-to-door outreach efforts carried out by the Public Involvement Team are an essential way to maintain communication with those residing or working in the vicinity of Exit 16 that may not have access to other means of notification. It is often the most effective way to contact local businesses and residents with important information and to gain insights into how they perceive the project. The Public Involvement Team will go out on foot to speak to residents or business managers about project updates, upcoming events or to leave factsheets with important project information.

Targeted outreach efforts occur within the limits of a designated area, usually when an impact is anticipated for only that select group of stakeholders based on usage or location.

3.5 SURVEYS

The Public Involvement Team will create and distribute a project survey at the end of each construction season and in the middle of the first construction season to gather stakeholder feedback on the project's delivery including site signage/navigation and the availability/sources of project information. The surveys are created in Survey Monkey and should take respondents no longer than 5 minutes to complete. Surveys are typically open for a period of two weeks and promoted on the project website, VTrans social media accounts, Front Porch Forum, and email notifications.

A survey results summary report will be prepared by the Public Involvement Team for submission to VTrans within two weeks after closing each survey.

4.0 BRANDING

The Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans prepared a set of Exit 16 DDI branding standards that establishes a recognizable project identity. Project branding includes a logo, color scheme, and font to be used uniformly across all project materials. Branding options were developed with consideration to the nature of the project, project area, stakeholders, and visibility across several different media platforms.

A total of three branding options were developed and presented to VTrans for consideration. A final branding recommendation was made based on feedback received.

The final branding scheme was approved and have been used on the website, brochure, video, project notifications, public presentations, and will continue to be used any other materials produced by the Public Involvement Team.

Horizontal Logo



Vertical Logo



5.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH NOTIFICATIONS

Public outreach notifications will be developed by the Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans and distributed through the Constant Contact email distribution list, door-to-door outreach and in person at public events.

5.1 CONSTANT CONTACT

Constant Contact is an online contact management system that stores contact information for stakeholders and allows the Public Involvement Team to distribute electronic notifications. The project's master email distribution list was uploaded and will continue to be maintained by the Public Involvement Team through the existing VTrans Constant Contact account.

The public can subscribe to the email distribution list via the project website, email, a verbal request to project staff, or by signing up at a public event.

5.2 PUBLIC NOTICES

Public notices will continue to be distributed to the email distribution list on a regular basis. Public notices include:

- Project Announcements (as needed)
- Meeting Announcements (4 weeks leading up to public meeting)
- Construction Updates (weekly during construction)
- Traffic Alerts (as needed for schedule or impact changes)

5.3 FRONT PORCH FORUM

The Public Involvement Team will continue to coordinate with VTrans, and in some cases the municipalities*, to post-project announcements, meeting notices, and weekly Construction Updates on the Front Porch Forum pages for each of the towns surrounding the project area. The towns include Colchester, Winooski, Burlington, Essex, and Milton.

CCRPC has the ability to post county-wide twice per month. The Public Involvement Team will continue coordinate with CCRPC to prepare a consolidated monthly post, as needed, to spread relevant project information throughout the county.

*The Town of Colchester has requested Colchester Front Porch Forum updates be posted by VTrans or consultant staff.

5.4 AOT ROAD CONSTRUCTION REPORT

During construction, the Public Involvement Team will supply project information to VTrans' Nicholas Cartularo for inclusion in his AOT Road Construction Report (formerly known as On the Road) newspaper column which is widely distributed throughout the State of Vermont, gratis.

5.5 VMS MESSAGING

During construction, the Public Involvement Team will coordinate the VTrans Project Manager, Resident Engineer, and the Contractor to develop content and place variable message signage alerting motorists to project activities, impacts, and expected delays. These messages may also include identifying routes around the affected area. For VMS located on I-89, the Public Involvement Team will coordinate with the appropriate VTrans project staff and/or TSMO to provide suggestions for messaging.

5.6 GRAPHICS

The Public Involvement Team, in coordination with VTrans and Stantec, has prepared and will continue to distribute project graphics and visualizations. These may include project location maps, detour maps, alternate route maps, renderings, and other graphics that can be used on educational materials, the project website, email notifications, and in public presentations.

6.0 PROJECT WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans is responsible for maintaining two-way communication with key stakeholders and the general public through the project website and will coordinate content and scheduled posts for VTrans owned social media accounts.

6.1 PROJECT WEBSITE

A project website was developed during the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project and launched in early 2019. The website is the primary source of information about the project.

In October of 2020, the website underwent a major overhaul featuring a more interactive user interface and project content. In January of 2021, a new interactive website was launched which included an interactive map. The interactive map includes existing conditions, animations of future conditions, and planned improvements which are geolocated. The interactive map will be updated throughout construction to identify key locations that are under construction or completed.

The following content is presented on the website:

- An overview- project history, issues, and opportunities
 - Project schedule
 - Maps
 - Link to VTransparency fact sheet
- Project news
- About DDIs- general information about DDIs, what they are, and how to navigate
 - Links to educational materials and video
- Interactive map
- Links to construction cameras
- Document library - an archive of all project materials including public meeting presentations
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Stay Informed - contact information and links to social media accounts

The website will continue to be updated on an as-needed basis as project information changes or milestones are achieved. During construction, the weekly Construction Updates will be posted on the homepage at the time of release.

6.2 SOCIAL MEDIA

The Public Involvement Team will continue to develop creative project content and posts to be distributed publicly through the existing VTrans social media accounts.

Existing VTrans social media accounts:

- Facebook- @VTransontheroad
- Twitter- @AOTVermont
- Instagram- @AOTVermont
- YouTube- VTransTV
- Flicker- VTrans

These outlets will continue to be used to distribute accurate and timely information to a broader audience. No new accounts will be opened for this project.

Regular updates will be posted for the following:

- Project news
- Educational materials or links
- Notice of public events
- Event photos
- Construction photos
- Links to project website

These postings are completed on an as-needed basis and in a consistent, expository style. Because all users of the social media accounts must consider its associated risks, including the conflation of personal and professional communications, spreading malware, disclosing sensitive information, and responding to crisis, VTrans will remain the final approver of all content and is responsible for all postings on its social media accounts.

7.0 EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Exit 16 DDI education program began with the launch of the project website in early 2019 and will continue past construction completion. The program will focus on educating the public on the benefits of DDIs, why a DDI was selected for this location, and how to navigate it. Information will be disseminated through the various channels listed in previous sections of this PIP but will rely heavily on tangible educational materials discussed below and in-person events.

7.1 FACT SHEET

The Public Involvement Team developed content updates for the VTransparency project fact sheet and will provide up to three content updates over the course of the project. A link to the fact sheet appears prominently on the project website and in project emails. Printed copies of the fact sheet will continue to be made available at the local municipality offices, CCRPC, all public information meetings and will continue to be distributed during any stakeholder interviews and door-to-door outreach efforts.

7.2 BROCHURE

The Public Involvement Team developed one highly visual project brochure that features the project overview, list of project milestones, graphics including final condition renderings (provided by Stantec), details on DDI benefits and navigation tips, and information on how to stay informed throughout the life of the project. An electronic copy of the brochure is available on the project website and printed copies will continue to be made available at the local municipality offices, CCRPC, all public information meetings and will continue to be distributed during any stakeholder interviews and door-to-door outreach efforts.

7.3 VIDEO

The Public Involvement Team coordinated with VTrans and Stantec to produce a 3 to 5-minute educational video featuring graphics, interviews, and information to assist the public in understanding this complex project. The video focused on educating the public about DDIs, the Exit 16 DDI, its benefits and how to safely navigate the construction site, and the final traffic pattern of the new interchange.

The video is posted on the project website, embedded in project emails, and distributed through VTrans social media platforms. The video will continue to be incorporated into public presentations.

7.4 DRIVER SIMULATION TOUR

The Public Involvement Team coordinated with VTrans an Stantec to understand the feasibility of the Exit 16 DDI driving simulator going on “tour” to various locations that are publicly accessible within the community including municipal offices, the CCRPC office, and community events. Based on this understanding, the Public Involvement Team created a list of potential venues to host the simulator.

The Exit 16 DDI driving simulator went on “tour” to various publicly accessible locations within the community as part of the education program including public events and a drivers’ education programs. The driving simulator will continue to go on “tour” to various public events and drivers’ education programs, where appropriate and in safe setting based on current State Covid Guidelines both prior to and during construction. The Exit 16 DDI driving simulator will be made available after construction for educational purposes.

7.5 PUBLIC EVENTS

During the project kick-off meeting, several public events were identified as opportunities to share project information. The Public Involvement Team will continue to prepare a list of community events in which the team could participate, providing the public with additional opportunities to learn about the project and ask questions of the project staff throughout the life of the project. The events range from educational presentations or hosting an Exit 16 DDI information booth at a local fair.

7.6 DRIVERS EDUCATION

VTrans staff has presented at a number of drivers education programs throughout Vermont to increase public exposure to the project and to help both drivers’ education instructors and new drivers how a DDI operates. VTrans has attended these drivers’ education classes with and without the simulator. VTrans staff will continue to visit and instruct new drivers and drivers’ educators throughout the construction and likely after the construction is completed to educate new drivers and increase awareness of how to safety and effectively navigate a DDI.

In coordination with VTrans, the Public Involvement Team with coordinate with the Department of Motor Vehicles to determine next steps for incorporating a section on how to navigate a DDI in the Vermont Drivers’ Manual.

8.0 PUBLIC INQUIRIES

The Public Involvement Team is responsible for monitoring and managing all public inquiries received through the project website, email, or verbal interaction. Timely responses to all project-related inquiries will continue to be prepared by the designated project team member based on the nature of the inquiry.

Inquiries submitted through the project website are directed to the project email account. Any correspondence received through this account initiates an auto-response “Thank you for your email...” that informs the recipient that the Public Involvement Team has received their inquiry and it will be answered in a timely manner.

8.1 HOTLINE AND PROJECT EMAIL ADDRESS

A project email account (info@Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov) was established at the same time as the project [website](#). This email account is used to access public comments or inquiries submitted through the project website. It will continue to be the main source for contacting the project staff, along with the project hotline that was established before Exit 16 DDI construction was anticipated to begin.

The hotline is a phone (802-595-4399) associated with a project-purchased pre-paid phone. This phone will continue to be answered 24/7 by the project’s local point of contact, Annabelle Dally, with the understanding that the majority of the project’s work will be occurring during nighttime hours.

If for any reason the local point of contact is unavailable, calls to the project hotline will be forwarded to the Deputy Project Manager for a timely response.

8.2 INQUIRY PROCESS

All calls or emails received with questions or comments related to the Exit 16 DDI are recorded and responded to by the Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans. Comments or inquiries received that are not in regard to the Exit 16 DDI project are forwarded to the correct parties. This may include inquiries regarding other VTrans or town projects in the area.

8.3 INQUIRY LOG

When an inquiry is received, it is logged in the Exit 16 DDI Inquiry Log, a living excel database. Each inquiry logged will continue to include:

- Inquiry identification number
- Applicable status- open, monitor, complete
- Date received
- Inquirer’s name and contact information
- Inquiry question/comment in as much detail as possible
- Date of response
- Name of responder
- Final response

9.0 MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGEMENT

The Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans will continue to maintain a close relationship with local news outlets. Such contact involves press releases, media alerts, advertising, email correspondences, and periodic phone or in-person briefings.

Reporters from media outlets can be furnished with story ideas and press releases issued by the Public Involvement Team. Through these media relationships and coordinating efforts, newspaper articles and newscasts that relay the project's intended messages are produced for the public.

Popular local media sources for Colchester, VT include:

- Newspaper/Online
 - Burlington Free Press
 - Colchester Sun
 - Seven Days
 - Milton Independent
 - Essex Reporter
 - The Hinesburg Record
 - Saint Albans Messenger

- Television/Online
 - NBC 5
 - WNNE
 - WCAX 3
 - News 10
 - My Champlain Valley Local 22 WVNY, Local 44 WFFF (studio located on Mountain View Drive)

- Radio
 - WIZN 106.7
 - WVPS 107.9
 - WRMC 91.1
 - WEZF 92.9
 - WVTK 92.1, 97.1
 - WXZO 96.7
 - WWPV 88.7
 - WRUV 90.1
 - WOKO 89.9
 - WXXX 95.5
 - WVMT 620
 - WBTZ 99.9 (studio is located just south of the project on Tigan Street)

9.1 MEDIA MONITORING

The Public Involvement Team is responsible for continuously monitoring media outlets for any articles or news stories related to the project. A log was created to keep track of these news stories which will continue to be updated throughout the life of the project. PDF copies of publications will continue to be saved in the project files. When applicable, related news articles will be posted on the Exit 16 DDI website.

Once a month, the Public Involvement Team issues a “Press Clips” email to the VTrans Contract Manager and Project Manager containing links to all media coverage found within the current month.

9.2 PRESS RELEASES / MEDIA ALERTS

Press releases and media alerts will continue to be prepared by the Public Engagement Team in coordination with VTrans to announce project milestones, public meetings, and/or other important project information on an as-needed basis. Press releases will continue to be issued to the media distribution list, maintained by the Public Involvement Team.

9.3 ADVERTISING / LEGAL NOTICES

Advertising is reserved for promoting public meetings and workshops. The Public Involvement Team in coordination with VTrans will determine if advertising is necessary, which outlets to advertise, and by what means.

Advertising can include:

- Public Service Announcement (PSA)
- Newspapers
- Online news outlets
- Local event calendars

Legal notices are drafted and placed in local newspapers (hard copy and online) in advance of public hearings. A disclaimer listing contact information for special assistance must be included in the notice.

9.4 MEDIA KITS

Media kits are informational packets created by the Public Involvement Team for media outlets and are on hand at public meetings. Media kits compile all available information in one location for media to navigate content for key information to include in their coverage.

Media Kits may include:

- Business card and contact information
- Table of Contents
- Press Release (if applicable)
- Hard copy of presentation
- Maps
- Handouts
- Glossary of Terms
- Fact Sheet
- Save-the-date for next meeting (if applicable)
- CD or flash drive with all above content saved digitally

10.0 REPORTING

10.1 MONTHLY STATUS REPORTS

The Public Involvement Team will continue to prepare monthly project status reports for VTrans that will be included with every invoice submission. The project status reports summarize all public involvement-related activities, deliverables, any problems affecting the project or requiring VTrans resolution as well as a list of all activities and deliverables to be completed in the upcoming month. The current Comment/Inquiry Log, Stakeholder List, and Media Log are included with each submission. These reports are submitted to the VTrans Contract Manager and Project Manager. In addition, WSP submits website analytics for the project website to the Project Manager monthly and will continue to do so throughout the life of the project.

10.2 END OF SEASON REPORTS

The Public Involvement Team will provide an End of Season Report following the completion of each construction season. These reports will include the end-of-season survey results, website analytics, the media log, and source documentation.

End of Season Survey Results: The Public Involvement Team will provide a summary of the project survey results including questions asked, responses broken down by both percentage and the number of responses, and a log of responses to all open-ended questions included in the survey.

Website analytics: This section of the report will highlight the total number of website views, new versus returning users, top referring sites, local and regional viewer geographic data. The website analytics will be broken down by monthly and yearly totals.

Media Log: The Public Involvement Team will provide a log of all the published articles and news stories related to the project.

10.3 POST-PROJECT REPORT

The Public Involvement Team will provide a post-project report describing the public involvement activities and deliverables completed by the Public Involvement Team over the life of the public information services contract for the Exit 16 DDI Project. The post-project report will incorporate a summary of the project and detail each of the public involvement deliverables and services completed by the Public Involvement team. All final deliverables will be included as appendix items to the post-project report.

The appendix will include:

- Stakeholder Contact List
- Stakeholder Comment/Inquiry Log
- Construction Update Sample
- Traffic Alert Sample
- Public Meeting Materials (presentations, handouts, posters, sign-in sheets)
- Fact Sheet Revisions
- Maps/Graphics
- Website Analytics
- Media List
- Media Log and All Source Documentation (copies of articles, links to videos)
- Survey Reports
- All Site Photos

Appendix A – OCTOBER 11, 2018 KICK-OFF MEETING SUMMARY

Exit 16 DDI – Kick-Off Meeting

October 11, 2018
Meeting Summary

Attendees

Michael LaCroix, VTrans Project Manager
Benjamin Tietze, VTrans Traffic Design Engineer
Jacqueline DeMent, VTrans Public Outreach Manager
Nancy Avery, VTrans Work Zone Traffic Management Engineer
Amy Bell, VTrans Transportation Planning Coordinators
Emma Vaughn, CCRPC Communications Manager
Eleni Churchill, CCRPC Transportation Program Manager
Paul Sarne, City of Winooski Communications Coordinator
Kathi O'Reilly, Town of Colchester Director Economic Development
Richard Tetreault, WSP Project Manager
Laura Toole, WSP Senior Supervising Manager Public Involvement Northeast
Megan Savage, WSP Deputy Project Manager
Annabelle Dally, WSP Public Outreach Coordinator

Meeting

Introductions and Project Summary

VTrans Project Manager, Michael Lacroix, opened by asking the attendees to briefly introduce themselves and identify their role on the project. He then gave a brief project summary before turning the meeting over to the WSP Public Outreach Team.

Michael Lacroix explained that the project was currently in final design. The project consists of replacing the current I-89 Exit 16 interchange with a diverging diamond interchange (DDI), the first DDI in the state of Vermont, and improvements to approximately 1 mile of roadway along US Routes 2/7. While there is some business opposition, the project is anticipated to go out to bid in November 2019. The project will be completed in 2.5 years starting in April 2020 and ending in July 2022. The first year will consist, primarily, of utility work.

Expectations

Following introductions, Richard Tetreault added to the agenda provided by WSP so that representatives from VTrans, the City of Winooski, the Town of Colchester, and the CCRPC discussed their expectations of the WSP Public Outreach Team for the duration of the Colchester Exit 16 DDI project. The expectations provided by VTrans include monthly status check in meetings via phone/skype with all written communications to include Michael LaCroix and Jacqueline DeMent. The Town of Colchester expects the WSP Team to communicate with stakeholders directly before and during construction to avoid becoming the middleman between the WSP Team and the stakeholders. Colchester prefers WSP use a communications vehicle other than its Front Porch Forum account. The City of Winooski expects the WSP Team to supply posting material for Front Porch Forum. The CCRPC offered to post two county wide Front Porch Forums per month as needed.

TMP Integration and Application

Nancy Avery described multiple projects including four highway projects in the vicinity of the DDI project throughout the anticipated project schedule. Projects include: Four Highway Bridges project, Route 15 bike/pedestrian project, Winooski Main Street Reconstruction project, US 2/US 7 Intersection project. Beginning in August 2019 through October 2020, the Four Highway Bridges project was highlighted as the project area's overlap causes significant impacts due to new traffic patterns from lane changes during peak hours along Interstate 89 as well as construction vehicles utilizing the Whitcomb Quarry at the Exit 16 interchange.

Incorporation of these four projects' traffic impacts in the project area will be crucial throughout the construction phase. Close attention will be paid to alternate and detour route coordination among the projects and there is the potential for traffic signal timing issues along those routes. Laura Toole suggested an interactive map on the project website to call out each project and how they affect each other and the traveling public.

Coordination with Stantec

Megan Savage inquired about the visualizations and graphics Stantec has created and/or is currently scoped to create. Michael Lacroix explained that Stantec will have existing graphics showing the proposed DDI, a drive-thru video simulation complete with accelerators, brakes, and steering wheel, and other simulations WSP can incorporate into the education program.

Laura Toole explained WSP's ability to create a virtual reality simulation from the driver's point of view and offered to bring the virtual reality gear to VTrans for a demonstration.

Public Involvement Plan

WSP presented the draft Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outline. The first public outreach meeting will be held in the fall of 2019 focusing on educating the public about the diverging diamond interchange. An additional public outreach meeting will be held in the winter of 2020 before construction begins. Surveys measuring communications and MPT effectiveness will be conducted at the end of each construction season. VTrans requested an additional mid-season survey to allow for adjustments in construction and outreach.

Stakeholder Contact List

Annabelle Dally reviewed the stakeholder contact list which focuses on businesses north of Exit 15 in Winooski and south Route 2A in Colchester, the CCRPC, the Town of Colchester municipal staff, and the City of Winooski municipal staff. Recommendations were made to incorporate municipal staff from Milton, Essex, Essex Junction, Williston, and Burlington, as well as Saint Michaels College, Saint Michaels EMS, local cab companies, additional emergency and police, FHWA, NWRPC, GBIC regional development, utility companies, GMT, Patrick Brennan, Dick Mazza, USCOE, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, VTrans Structures, VTrans Civil Rights, VTrans Maintenance and Operations, VTrans Project Delivery, and VTrans Construction and Materials. Annabelle explained that the WSP Team will conduct door-to-door outreach to the businesses near Exit 16 on the stakeholder contact list.

Education Campaign

In addition to the visualizations created by Stantec, including graphics, videos, and simulations, WSP will create and refine educational materials- brochure, fact sheet, etc. WSP will produce a 3-5 minute video providing an overview of the diverging diamond interchange, what it is and how it works. The video will feature VTrans personnel who will provide narration.

Educational materials will be shared with the municipalities, and the CCRPC for use at Council Meeting presentations, in the Town and City offices, and at recommended local events including but

not limited to: Town Meeting Day, the Driver's Ed Conference, touch-a-truck events, driver's education locations, the Champlain Valley Fair, and pop-up booths at Farmer's Markets in Burlington and Winooski.

The group discussed the potential for the driving simulator, provided by Stantec, to go on tour to various locations for public use and DDI navigation training.

Website

Megan Savage discussed the project website. VTrans recommended the project website go live by December 25, 2018, however, after further discussion the project website must go live by January 1, 2019. Jacqueline DeMent explained the project website must be a .gov. Suggestions were made to create a short simple project website address that will redirect to the ".gov" website. Megan Savage presented examples of the project name to be incorporated in project materials and the website. A discussion of appropriate project names began and it was decided that WSP would create a list of potential names to be shared with all attendees and a project name would be selected by October 19, 2018. Megan Savage discussed the difference between using Constant Contact and CommentSense™ for stakeholder contact management. Per Megan Savage's recommendation the project website will not incorporate CommentSense™ and Constant Contact will be used to distribute construction updates, traffic alerts, and public meeting notices.

WSP will create branding and logo options to be reviewed by VTrans. The approved branding/logo will be used on all project materials.

Determine Social Media Handles

Megan Savage discussed the use of social media including a project specific Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram. Jacqueline DeMent recommended the use of existing VTrans social media accounts to prevent the need to build social media followers for individualized accounts. WSP and will use existing social media accounts. The VTrans social media accounts will be used for major project milestones, public meeting announcements, and pop-up campaigns.

Project Hotline

Megan Savage discussed the need for a project hotline. WSP suggested a cell phone that can be answered during nighttime construction hours. VTrans decided that the project hotline will be active once construction begins unless the need arises prior to the start of construction.

Action Items

- WSP to create a list of potential project names to distribute among attendees.
- WSP to follow up on Front Porch Forum options with VTrans regarding universal account.
- WSP to follow up with CCRPC regarding monthly county wide Front Porch Forum postings.
- WSP to create interactive map on project website highlighting other projects and impacts in the vicinity.
- WSP to finalize website name by October 19, 2018.
- WSP to create project website to launch by the start of the new year.
- WSP to follow up with VTrans regarding virtual reality demonstration.
- WSP to provide lessons learned from the Waterbury Area Transportation Projects occurring simultaneously, specially the Waterbury Roundabout and I-89 Bridges projects.
- WSP to follow up on receiving Brent Curtis's weekly traffic updates and the CCRPC weekly traffic report.
- WSP to update stakeholder contact list to include additional contacts specified by VTrans and the Town of Colchester.

- VTrans to request RSG updates TMP.
- VTrans to provide current TMP to WSP.
- VTrans to provide Stantec's write up and completed graphics/videos.
- VTrans to follow up on utility company coordination.